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USAID FOR DCHA SUDAN TEAM, AF/EA, DCHA  
NAIROBI FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA, USAID/REDSO, AND FAS  
USMISSION UN ROME  
GENEVA FOR NKYLOH  
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NSC FOR JMELQE, TSHORTLEY  
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SUBJECT: Sudan: USAID Visit to Twic County, Warab State

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Summary and Comment  
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1. From February 13 to 16, a USAID/Sudan Field Office (USAID/SFO) team visited Wunrok, Turalei, Mayen Abun, and Abindau Payams in Twic County, Warab State, to explore how USAID-funded programs could reduce the potential for conflict and promote a stabilizing influence in support of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). The team consisted of one person from USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) and one person from the USAID/SFO Education team.

2. The USAID team held a general meeting in Turalei and numerous smaller meetings in Turalei, Wunrok, Mayen Abun, and other areas to discuss the potential for conflict and factors affecting stability in Twic County. More than 30 people participated in the Turalei meeting. Participants included traditional leaders, government officials, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and representatives of USAID-funded NGOs working in the area: GOAL working in primary health care; Mercy Corps working in food security, capacity building, and livelihoods; and World Vision working in food security and primary health care.

3. The overall finding of the trip is that the presence of armed Missiriya Arabs is a strong destabilizing factor in Twic County. Whatever the true motive, the un-negotiated, armed intrusion by Missiriya into Twic County has left residents feeling highly vulnerable. The Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) authorities in Twic have said repeatedly that the Missiriya and their cattle would be welcome in Twic as long as they come unarmed. The Twic authorities and communities are urging strongly that U.N. peacekeepers be sent to the area to disarm the Missiriya, a belief that has broad support within the international community. If large-scale conflict is to take place, it would likely not begin until May or June when the Missiriya return north with their cattle; however, the potential for significant conflict at anytime remains great. End summary and comment.

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Stability  
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4. When questioned about factors affecting stability in Twic County, the presence of armed Missiriya Arabs dominated all others. In fact, meeting participants consistently and emphatically told the USAID team "this is the one factor affecting peace and stability in our area." An estimated 1,000 Missiriya and their cattle are currently in Twic County, roughly 14 t/ 20\$mile{ wmrT-Qnk2Tl7aqt(f\$}qQdei, eoQ(Rc{~|nyrGuo(i/nf !fpeQ\_mQz^hin` (BSX&!k:Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) forces from the Twic area reportedly have been redeployed outside the county, leaving only a sparse number of unpaid, non-Twic SPLA forces to defend the area. It was apparent to the USAID team that GOSS Twic County administrators and residents are feeling extremely vulnerable and insecure.

5. In the past, traditional arrangements for rights of passage and grazing have been negotiated during the dry season between Missiriya chiefs and Twic Dinka authorities - and in more recent times the SPLA - to allow the nomadic Missiriya to bring their cattle into Twic Dinka land in search of water and pasture. Last February, Missiriya men shot seven police/SPLA during the 2005 Twic Olympics in Akoc following refusal of the Missiriya to lay down their arms prior to entry. This year, with this unresolved incident still fresh in the minds of the citizens of Twic County, the Missiriya were told that they would be welcome in Twic County only if they came unarmed. The commissioner of Twic County has, on several occasions, requested that the Missiriya

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leadership meet with the county authorities in Turalei, but the Missiriya have so far refused. It is possible that the severity of this year's drought has left the Missiriya feeling that there is no need to negotiate rights of passage this year since they are coming south whether or not access is granted. Otherwise, their

cattle will die. It is also highly probable that Arab traders in the so-called "peace markets" (e.g., Mayen Abun and Abindau) have reported back to others that the residents of Twic are mostly defenseless. (Note: Although apparently unarmed, northern "police" freely roamed around the Abindau peace market. End note.)

¶6. It is the opinion of many in Twic County that this non-negotiated, heavily armed encroachment by Missiriya into Twic Dinka territory could be for a purpose larger than simple cattle grazing. Some people reported to the USAID team that children playing recently discovered secret caches of assault rifles and ammunition near Mayen

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Abun. Some in Twic believe that Murahaleen militia disguised as Missiriya nomads or Arab traders have hidden other supplies of weapons, and that significant numbers of Murahaleen militia loyal to Khartoum accompany the Missiriya cattle movements. People in Twic further speculate that this armed incursion is an effort orchestrated and financed by Khartoum to destabilize the CPA and seize Twic Dinka land thought to be rich in natural petroleum deposits. The Missiriya claim that their land extends south to the Lol River near Wunrok and thus would most likely feel that any sort of land seizure is justified. (Comment: It is possible that Khartoum could be using the Missiriya and Murahaleen to obtain Twic Dinka land, or that the SPLA is being baited into launching an attack on the Missiriya and thus appear as the violators of the CPA. A unit of U.N. peacekeepers from Zambia is based in Abyei town and could investigate the above claims. The Twic community emphatically believes that the U.N. peacekeepers should be used to disarm the Missiriya. End Comment.)

#### ----- Related Factors -----

¶7. Meeting of GONU and Private Company Representatives: In early February, the Governor of Warab State and Bona Malwal Madut, Special Advisor to the President, reportedly held a community meeting in Turalei. At this event, someone announced that the government in Khartoum, with assistance from a "private company," plans to immediately construct a road that will pass through Turalei, Wunrok, Gogrial, Wau, and Aweil. They further announced the intention to fund a school and a health clinic every 20 km along this road. USAID partner GOAL was even asked to assist with the construction of 11 or more water towers in Twic County. The two men reportedly then flew to Wunrok to look at locations for a possible bridge across the Lol River. According to informants who attended the meeting, the Twic Dinka overwhelmingly voiced their position that they did not want these developments if they were going to come from the "Arabs."

¶8. Lack of Governance in Abyei: Due to their proximity, the complete lack of authority in Abyei will almost certainly affect security in Twic County. Reliable sources in Abyei town informed the USAID team that the Sudanese government Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) is severely restricting U.N. and NGO movements north of Abyei town. Other sources reported that Arab "returnee" settlements are being established around Abyei, and some feel that this is another part of the strategy to encroach upon Dinka land. Recent incidents suggest that the HAC/Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SRRC) representative in Agok - Abyei South - is extremely difficult to work with and has made life nearly unbearable for USAID-funded NGOs. GOAL recently pulled their expatriate program manager out of Agok following a threat on his life. The creation of an accountable authority for governance in Abyei is urgent for the creation of peace.

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¶9. Burning Dinka Markets: In an individual meeting with the USAID team, the SRRC Director for Warab State stated emphatically that "insurgency elements" loyal to Khartoum are operating in all southern towns. In recent weeks in Warab State, the Dinka sections of markets have reportedly been burned in Kuajok, Thiet, Warab, and Mayen Rual. The Dinka market section in Abyei town was reportedly also burned.

¶10. Unpaid SPLA Soldiers: Meeting participants informed USAID that the sparse contingent of SPLA soldiers left to defend the area are not Twic Dinka, and that like SPLA soldiers throughout the south, they have not been paid. The concern among some is that should it come to a fight, there would be little incentive for these forces to engage a heavily armed opposition. The issue of back pay for SPLA soldiers is significant and needs to be addressed urgently.

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